This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

181133Z Apr 04

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 000551

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/18/2024
TAGS: BA PHUM PREL UNHCR
SUBJECT: BAHRAIN SAYS IT'S AGAINST CUBAN RESOLUTION ON
GUANTANAMO DETAINEES

REF: STATE 85231

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Robert S. Ford, reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Bahraini MFA Minister of State Abdelghaffar told
Charge April 18 that Bahrain does not think the Cuban
resolution about Guantanamo detainees is helpful, and it
asked Cuba to withdraw the resolution. Abdelghaffar said it
was obvious the Cubans are trying to score political points
with the resolution. Bahrain has no special bilateral
relationship with Cuba and the resolution would not help
Bahrain, he stated flatly.

¶2. (C) Comment: The Minister of State had just finished
justifying Bahrain's vote against the American-backed
resolution condemning Cuban human rights violations. The
Minister said his government had decided in that instance to
maintain ranks with other Arab governments which all were
voting against the anti-Cuban resolution. When Charge then
raised the Cuban resolution on Guantanamo, the Minister of
State's categoric assertion surprised us. The fate of six
Bahrainis in Guantanamo is a big domestic political issue; it
is often front-page news here. A variety of domestic human
rights groups as well as members of the Parliament regularly
criticize the MFA for not helping the six Bahrainis. The MFA
is, predictably, quite sensitive about the criticism.

¶3. (C) Comment continued: The logic of Bahraini political
decision-making suggests that (a) if the Cuban resolution
gains international attention such that the MFA's vote is
subject to political scrutiny in Bahrain or (b) if there is a
push among the Arab states to back the Cuban resolution, then
the MFA likely would vote for the Cuban resolution, despite
the Minister's remark to us April 18. This is why the MFA
would prefer the Cubans withdraw the resolution.
FORD